

Winning Ways HR Leaders Reduce Employee Turnover and Employee Replacement Costs

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Abstract

Ineffective employee well-being strategies can contribute to elevated levels of voluntary turnover, resulting in increased employee replacement costs, lost organizational knowledge, and operational disruption. Human resource (HR) leaders who do not successfully develop employee well-being strategies may find their organization facing operational disruptions as a result. Grounded in social sustainability and the European corporate sustainability frameworks, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry research project was to identify and explore effective employee well-being strategies used by HR leaders to reduce employee turnover and employee replacement costs. The participants were 10 HR leaders who had implemented effective employee well-being strategies. Data were collected through semistructured interviews and secondary data from publicly available sources. Using thematic analysis, six themes were identified: 1) work-life flexibility and sustainable work design, 2) well-being and psychological safety, 3) change enablement and communication, 4) talent growth and total rewards, 5) people-centered and inclusive leadership, and 6) data-driven feedback. A key recommendation is for HR leaders to position themselves as change enablers who align employee well-being initiatives with long-term organizational performance and social sustainability outcomes. The implications for positive social change include the potential for HR leaders to reinforce employee dignity, long-term employability, and economic security. The implications may also include career mobility, financial well-being, and inclusive economic participation, thereby advancing the economic prosperity of the inhabitants and the community.

Keywords

Employee Well-Being, Employee Retention, Employee Turnover, Employee Replacement Costs, Cost of Turnover, Employee Engagement, Leadership Strategies, Sustainability, Social Sustainability

1. Introduction

Employee well-being represents a central component of social sustainability, as it directly influences employee engagement, retention, and productivity. Within organizations, ineffective or underdeveloped employee well-being strategies contribute to elevated levels of voluntary turnover, resulting in increased employee replacement costs, lost organizational knowledge, and operational disruption (Fosu, 2025). Despite growing recognition of the importance of employee well-being, some human resources (HR) leaders continue to struggle with identifying, implementing, and sustaining evidence-based well-being strategies that effectively mitigate turnover and associated costs.

How organizations approach employee well-being has significant implications for turnover, costs, and organizational resilience. Empirical research has indicated that organizations that prioritize employee well-being through structured, intentional strategies experience lower turnover rates and improved organizational outcomes (Prasad et al., 2025). Conversely, treating employee well-being as a peripheral or reactive concern increases turnover and replacement costs, weakening organizational resilience and sustainability.

2. Methods

A qualitative research method was used for the research project. A qualitative research methodology enabled us to broaden the exploratory process to understand the professional experiences and strategies of the HR professionals. When a concept requires understanding due to limited research, a qualitative approach is conducive as the research method (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The pragmatic inquiry research design was employed to understand the practical, real-time strategies adopted due to their effectiveness. The pragmatic inquiry research design was justified for this project, as it enabled a flexible, adaptive approach to understanding complex phenomena in real-world environments (Ramanadhan et al., 2021). This design aligned with the project's focus, emphasizing the insights that explain which strategies HR professionals use and how and why those strategies are effective in practice.

The data used for the research project comprised semistructured interviews on business-related low-risk topics, along with, public reports and documents, peer-reviewed articles, web pages, and books used to support data triangulation. These sources provided contextual and operational evidence that corroborated the interview findings and situated participants' perspectives within the existing research, thereby strengthening the credibility and depth of the analysis. Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-step thematic analysis process guided the initial analysis process. Member checking was used to ensure that the interpretations of the participants' responses were accurate. Data saturation was used to ensure that there were no new data forthcoming or disclosed by the participants, and the use of methodological triangulation ensured that all of the data collected supported the themes that emerged. The conceptual framework used, the lenses through which to study

the phenomenon, was [van Marrewijk and Hardjono's \(2003\)](#) European corporate sustainability framework (ECSF) and [Eizenberg and Jabareen's \(2017\)](#) social sustainability theory.

MAXQDA software was used secondary to the manual data analysis process to apply a structured coding scheme to the interview transcripts enabling the researchers to check their initial themes. The result reflected the same themes that were initially identified. The use of MAXQDA resulted in 132 coded segments across 66 distinct codes. The resulting codes captured both the range and depth of concepts emerging from the data and coinciding with the initial themes, including leadership behaviors, strategic considerations shaping employee well-being initiatives, barriers to effective implementation, and approaches to measuring employee feedback. Together, these themes reflected the key dimensions through which participants articulated their experiences and perspectives, forming the foundation for subsequent theme development.

Consistent with reflexive thematic analysis, reflexivity was actively maintained throughout the analytic process. Having a professional background in HR leadership informed analytic sensibilities, shaping how participants' descriptions of roles, strategies, and organizational processes were recognized and interpreted. Through reflexive thematic analysis, ongoing reflexive practice was used to critically examine how prior knowledge influenced interpretation, while ensuring that theme development remained grounded in the participants' own words and meanings. Member checking helped validate the process, in which participants reviewed summaries of their responses and clarified and/or verified the accuracy of the interpretations as needed. Through this iterative reflexive process, the analysis was strengthened by enhanced descriptive clarity and transparency.

3. Theories

3.1. Social Sustainability Theory

[Eizenberg and Jabareen \(2017\)](#) defined social sustainability as a multidimensional construct aimed reducing social risk, enhancing quality of life, and promoting equitable participation. Originally applied to urban planning, the principles of social sustainability theory are highly relevant to organizational contexts, particularly HR practices. The framework identifies four core constructs: equity, safety and security, social responsibility, and supportive organizational forms.

Equity in organizations reflects fairness in resource allocation, recognition of employee contributions, and inclusive participation in decision-making processes, all of which shape employees' perceptions of fairness and organizational justice ([Haines et al., 2024](#)). This principle is demonstrated through fair compensation, transparent policies, and equitable access to professional development opportunities. By fostering such practices, equity not only enhances employee well-being but also reduces perceptions of unfairness, a key driver of voluntary turnover.

Safety and security emphasize protection against harmful conditions. Psycho-

logically and physically safe workplaces reduce attrition and yield economic benefits. These benefits include lower absenteeism, fewer medical claims, and decreased turnover-related costs (May et al., 2024). Together, these outcomes demonstrate that investing in safety and security is essential for workforce sustainability and a financially sound organizational strategy.

Social responsibility in organizations involves management practices that prioritize employee well-being alongside performance expectations. Initiatives such as flexible work arrangements (FWAs), wellness programs, and recognition systems enhance engagement and retention, especially when supported by positive organizational climates. Research shows that HR practices emphasizing well-being, such as flexible work and wellness initiatives, are strongly associated with higher levels of workplace engagement and satisfaction when reinforced by supportive organizational and supervisory environments (Chang & Hu, 2025). By addressing employees' needs holistically, these practices foster engagement, increase job satisfaction, and improve retention outcomes.

Supportive organizational structures foster connection, collaboration, and a sense of belonging. Inclusive cultures strengthen employees' psychological safety and relational identification, which in turn increase job embeddedness and reduce employee turnover (Yang, 2025). When organizations intentionally build these structures, they create environments where employees feel valued and connected, reinforcing engagement and long-term commitment.

3.2. European Corporate Sustainability Framework

Introduced by van Marrewijk and Hardjono in 2003, the ECSF is a strategic management framework designed to embed sustainability into organizational practices. Although initially corporate-focused, the framework's principles apply directly to HR challenges. ECSF emphasizes social sustainability through equity, inclusion, ethical practices, and stakeholder engagement, critical levers for workforce stability.

ECSF is supported by several interrelated theories: stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), which recognizes employees as key stakeholders; institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), which suggests adopting socially sustainable practices to gain legitimacy; and the triple bottom line approach (Elkington, 1998), which balances social outcomes alongside economic performance. Together, these theories provide HR leaders with a conceptual basis for designing well-being initiatives that improve engagement and reduce turnover.

3.3. Integrating ECSF Principles with Social Sustainability Theory

Combining ECSF with social sustainability theory provides a dual analytical lens for addressing employee well-being and turnover by aligning structured governance mechanisms with relational and equity-based principles. ECSF's emphasis on stakeholder engagement, particularly the inclusion of employees in policy development and organizational decision-making, parallels social sustainability the-

ory's focus on equity and participation. This alignment strengthens employee voice, increases organizational commitment, and reduces turnover intentions (Obeng et al., 2021).

Equitable and transparent HR policies promoted by ECSF reflect ethical practices central to social sustainability theory, reducing perceptions of unfairness that often lead to voluntary turnover and lowering the financial burden of employee replacement. Furthermore, socially responsible HR practices such as FWAs, professional development opportunities, wellness programs, and recognition systems operationalize both frameworks by directly enhancing employee well-being while fostering job embeddedness and long-term retention. ECSF-guided leadership also supports organizational cultures characterized by belonging, collaboration, and ethical responsibility, elements social sustainability theory identifies as critical to social cohesion. When employees feel deeply embedded within such supportive structures, turnover rates decline, mitigating the substantial productivity and replacement costs associated with employee departures (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Aligning ECSF with social sustainability theory emphasizes the economic rationale for investing in employee well-being, given the substantial costs associated with turnover, including recruitment, onboarding, training, and lost productivity (Allen et al., 2010). By applying ECSF principles alongside social sustainability constructs, organizations can implement evidence-based strategies that proactively address social risk, enhance engagement, and maintain workforce stability. Research consistently demonstrates that equitable and participatory HR practices increase perceptions of fairness, recognition, and employee voice, factors strongly associated with lower turnover intentions and higher organizational commitment (Nair et al., 2025). Similarly, safety-focused and supportive work environments reduce stress and burnout, leading to decreased absenteeism and lower health-related and productivity costs (Verma & Sinha, 2025). Socially responsible HR initiatives, such as inclusive work-life balance policies, wellness programs, and employee development opportunities, further strengthen engagement and embeddedness, reducing the likelihood of voluntary departure and its substantial financial burden on organizations (Casper et al., 2025). Collectively, this evidence demonstrates that socially sustainable HR practices are not only ethically grounded but also economically strategic, aligning employee well-being with organizational performance, retention, and long-term cost reduction objectives (Bai, 2025).

Using the integrated framework enabled equity, safety, inclusion, stakeholder engagement, and socially responsible HR practices to be examined as key mechanisms influencing engagement, commitment, and retention, while also explaining why ineffective well-being strategies persist. Together, these principles provide HR leaders with a structured, evidence-based approach for embedding employee well-being into organizational strategy, demonstrating how ECSF-aligned, socially sustainable practices enhance engagement, retain talent, and reduce turnover-related costs.

4. Findings

The analytic process produced six overarching themes (see **Table 1**), each representing an interdependent dimension of how HR leaders approach reducing employee turnover and employee replacement costs.

Table 1. Major interview themes.

Major themes	No. of participants who referenced theme	No. of references made to theme
Work-life flexibility and sustainable work design	7	10
Well-being and psychological safety	7	7
Change enablement and communication	8	18
Talent growth and total rewards	7	12
People-centered and inclusive leadership	8	9
Data-driven feedback	10	10

Theme 1: Work-Life Flexibility and Sustainable Work Design

The first theme focused on HR leaders' approach to work-life flexibility and sustainable work design, enabling employees to better integrate work with personal demands, thereby decreasing burnout, improving well-being, and strengthening long-term organizational commitment. Participants outlined strategies to create an environment that encourages employee engagement, thereby reducing costly attrition. This theme is articulated through two interrelated and mutually reinforcing subthemes: work-life balance and workload sustainability.

Theme 2: Well-Being and Psychological Safety

The second theme emphasizes how HR leaders consistently advocate a holistic, systems-level approach to employee well-being rather than isolated wellness initiatives. HR leaders identified well-being and psychological safety as proactive approaches to improving workplace culture, emphasizing their role in cultivating environments where employees feel safe, valued, and included. This theme is articulated through two interrelated subthemes: well-being support systems and sustainability of well-being programs.

Theme 3: Change Enablement and Communication

The third theme highlights a consistent finding across interviews that effective employee well-being strategies require deliberate change enablement and communication. Change management, communication, and buy-in were described as interdependent elements functioning as a unified system rather than as separate processes. This theme is expressed through two interrelated subthemes that collectively illustrate its core dimensions: change management and effective communication and buy-in.

Theme 4: Talent Growth and Total Rewards

The fourth theme highlights the importance of talent growth and total rewards

as critical drivers in an organization's commitment to employees' values. Participants repeatedly stressed that strategies under this category represent the operational and strategic infrastructure that enable workforce effectiveness, retention, and equity. This theme contains two interrelated subthemes: professional development and budget stewardship.

Theme 5: People-Centered and Inclusive Leadership

The fifth theme reflects leadership behaviors and cultural conditions that shape employee experience and engagement across the organization. Participants described actively prioritizing employee well-being by valuing diverse perspectives and implementing policies and practices that support employees' holistic needs and sustained performance. This theme aligns with social sustainability theory (Eizenberg & Jabareen, 2017) and the ECSF (van Marrewijk & Hardjono, 2003), illustrating how inclusive, people-centered leadership and supportive organizational cultures embed well-being, equity, and engagement into everyday practices that sustain human capital and organizational performance over time. This theme comprises three interrelated subthemes: employee belonging, employee engagement, and proactive employee relations.

Theme 6: Data-Driven Feedback

The sixth theme reflects the most frequently cited item among leaders in measuring the effectiveness of well-being strategies to reduce employee turnover and replacement costs. Participants described using data-driven feedback mechanisms, including employee surveys, stay interviews, business scorecards, time-bound communications, and targeted marketing, tracking time-off utilization trends, and external benchmarking, to systematically assess what well-being strategies were effective or ineffective, enabling evidence-based adjustments aimed at reducing employee turnover and associated replacement costs. Participant 8 indicated that their organization has administered an anonymous survey through an external department to track year-over-year employee perceptions of engagement, satisfaction, leadership, team dynamics, and organizational support, with the results informing the unit's strategic direction for the following year. In addition, Participant 10 noted that HR analytics, combined with employee feedback, were used to assess underlying patterns and trends influencing burnout, engagement, and retention, resulting in a reduction in voluntary turnover of 15% - 22% and measurable decreases in employee replacement costs.

Research further reinforces the need for data-driven feedback to determine effective well-being strategies. Londhe et al. (2025) demonstrated that organizations using data-backed HR strategies are more effective at improving workplace satisfaction and reducing employee turnover, and that embedding workforce analytics into routine HR decision-making enables targeted well-being and engagement interventions that strengthen retention outcomes. Similarly, De Vos et al. (2024) demonstrated how HR analytics and data-backed decision-making improve organizations' ability to identify turnover risk and intervene proactively. Collectively, this evidence shows that integrating analytics into HR decision making en-

ables organizations to target well-being interventions more precisely, strengthening retention while reducing avoidable turnover and replacement costs.

Theme 6 aligns closely with social sustainability theory, which emphasizes continuous evaluation, participatory feedback, and adaptive governance as mechanisms for sustaining human well-being within organizations (Eizenberg & Jabareen, 2017). By systematically integrating employee voice, workforce analytics, and benchmarking into decision-making, HR leaders operationalize social sustainability through evidence-based practices that promote equity, resilience, and long-term workforce stability. Similarly, this theme reflects the ECSF's emphasis on measurement, learning, and continuous improvement as essential to embedding sustainability into organizational strategy, demonstrating that data-driven well-being initiatives are not episodic interventions but enduring systems that support employee retention and organizational viability (van Marrewijk & Hardjono, 2003). This perspective underscores that when well-being metrics are systematically integrated into organizational learning and decision processes, they create feedback loops that strengthen strategic resilience, sustain employee commitment, and reduce long-term turnover and replacement costs.

5. Professional Practice

The findings from this qualitative, pragmatic inquiry offer actionable guidance for HR leaders seeking to make informed, outcome-optimized, fiscally responsible, and equitable decisions about employee well-being strategies to reduce employee turnover and replacement costs. Interpreted together, the six themes point to a leadership model grounded in people-centered and inclusive leadership, characterized by proactive employee relations, intentional engagement, clear and transparent communication, and the strategic integration of well-being into organizational decision-making. The model emphasizes shared responsibility, trust-building, and sustainable work design, positioning HR leaders as change enablers who align employee well-being initiatives with long-term organizational performance and social sustainability outcomes. While the findings do not demonstrate measured cost reductions, HR leaders perceived that employee well-being strategies influence estimated turnover-related cost implications, including reduced recruitment burden, greater retention continuity, and diminished productivity disruption associated with employee departures (Cascio, 2006; Hom et al., 2017). These perceived cost implications are consistent with prior research indicating that turnover generates substantial indirect organizational costs through lost institutional knowledge, disrupted workflows, and reduced team effectiveness, even when precise cost savings are not formally quantified.

5.1. Advancing Work-Life Flexibility through Sustainable Work Design

HR leaders should intentionally implement work-life flexibility and sustainable work design as a core employee well-being strategy by structuring work to support

balance, resilience, and long-term performance. Embedding flexibility into work structures advances socially sustainable practices that reduce burnout, strengthen organizational commitment, and mitigate employee turnover and replacement costs, positioning employee well-being as both a moral responsibility and a strategic sustainability imperative. Pragmatic evidence supports this recommendation. Wang et al. (2021) demonstrated that work design features such as job autonomy, supportive social structures, and manageable workloads reduce work-home interference and burnout while sustaining employee well-being and performance in FWAs. Similarly, Peretz (2024) found that sustainable HRM practices, particularly those emphasizing flexibility and employee-centered work structures, enhance employee engagement and performance across cultural contexts, reinforcing flexible work design as a socially sustainable strategy that supports long-term organizational commitment and reduced turnover.

5.2. Fostering Psychological Safety as a Business Strategy

Organizational leaders should intentionally foster psychologically safe environments as a foundational strategy for supporting employee well-being and resilience. Leaders are encouraged to embed practices that promote open communication, trust, and support, enabling employees to voice concerns, seek assistance, and adapt without fear of negative consequences—particularly during periods of organizational change and uncertainty (Grum & Babnik, 2022). HR leaders should further implement supportive and inclusive HR practices that reinforce relational safety and equitable treatment, as these conditions have been shown to strengthen both employee and organizational resilience by enhancing trust, inclusion, and coping capacity (Aljuaid, 2025). Prioritizing mental health and psychological safety through sustainable HRM approaches positions organizations to reduce burnout, increase engagement, and improve long-term employee retention (Bhoir & Sinha, 2024). Taken together, this evidence demonstrates that fostering psychologically safe, supportive, and inclusive work environments is not only a well-being imperative but also a strategic lever for sustaining resilience, engagement, and retention during ongoing change.

5.3. Driving Change Management and Buy-In

Effective change management is essential to the successful adoption and long-term sustainability of organizational initiatives, particularly employee well-being strategies intended to reduce turnover and associated replacement costs. Research consistently demonstrates that change efforts are more likely to succeed when leaders prioritize transparent, timely, and collaborative communication that builds trust and fosters employee buy-in (Hubbart, 2023). Clear communication enables employees to understand the rationale, benefits, and personal relevance of well-being initiatives, reducing uncertainty and resistance while strengthening psychological ownership and commitment. Research further indicates that employee buy-in is strongly influenced by trust in leadership and the quality of workplace relationships, underscoring the importance of inclusive and participatory

change processes when implementing well-being interventions (Som & Chan, 2024). Organizational change research confirms that communication functions not merely as a support mechanism but as a central driver of engagement, readiness, and behavioral alignment, which are factors closely associated with sustained participation and retention (Taruchaín-Pozo et al., 2025). Accordingly, HR leaders who embed structured change management practices, such as early stakeholder involvement, consistent messaging, and continuous feedback mechanisms, are more likely to achieve lasting well-being outcomes, strengthen employee commitment, and mitigate turnover and replacement costs.

5.4. Aligning Talent Growth and Total Rewards

Aligning career development and total rewards strategies is a critical recommendation for sustaining employee well-being, long-term engagement, and organizational value while reducing employee turnover and replacement costs. Recent research on organizational career growth demonstrates that when employees perceive clear opportunities for skill development, role enrichment, and internal advancement, they exhibit stronger organizational commitment and lower turnover intentions, as career growth signals long-term investment in the employee-organization relationship (Wang & Abu Hasan, 2024). Complementing this, research on total rewards emphasizes that employees evaluate compensation, benefits, work-life supports, and developmental opportunities holistically rather than as isolated incentives; when these elements are aligned with career development, they reinforce perceived fairness, support, and well-being, which are central to retention (Fulmer & Li, 2022). Together, these findings suggest that organizations should intentionally integrate career pathways, learning investments, and comprehensive rewards systems to create a sustainable employment value proposition that supports employee well-being, enhances engagement, and mitigates the high financial and operational costs associated with voluntary turnover and talent replacement.

5.5. Advancing People-Centered and Inclusive Leadership

Organizational leaders should intentionally advance inclusive, people-centered leadership practices that prioritize belonging, trust, and employee support as a core strategy to enhance well-being and reduce employee turnover and replacement costs. Leaders should be trained and held accountable for consistently demonstrating inclusive behaviors, such as open communication, accessibility, recognition of individual contributions, and support for diverse perspectives, which have been shown to significantly strengthen employee well-being and psychological safety (Liu et al., 2024). In addition, organizations should embed structured practices, including regular developmental feedback, inclusive decision-making, and manager-led well-being check-ins, to signal care, fairness, and respect, factors shown to enhance perceived inclusion and trust while lowering turnover intentions (Seck & Borchert, 2025). Leadership development programs should also explicitly link inclusive leadership competencies to well-being out-

comes and retention metrics, ensuring leaders understand their role in mitigating the financial and operational costs of employee replacement. Collectively, this evidence reinforces that inclusive leadership indirectly reduces turnover by improving employee well-being, organizational identification, and leader-member exchange, thereby supporting workforce stability and long-term organizational sustainability (Li et al., 2025). Inclusive leadership functions as a critical mechanism that aligns people-centered leadership practices with retention outcomes by fostering stable, supportive, and resilient workplace relationships.

5.6. Leveraging Data-Driven Feedback

Leaders should systematically leverage employee feedback (e.g., pulse surveys, stay interviews, open-text comments) and people analytics (e.g., absence trends, workload indicators, employee assistance program and benefits utilization, engagement and sentiment patterns) to design and continuously refine well-being strategies that proactively reduce turnover risk. When organizations connect employee data to workforce outcomes, leaders can identify specific well-being pain points that predict turnover intention, segment risk by role, unit, or manager, and deploy targeted interventions with the greatest impact. Research indicates that employee well-being is negatively associated with turnover intention and partially mediates the relationship between broader employee experience factors and quit intent, underscoring the importance of grounding well-being initiatives in continuous employee input rather than assumptions (Nair et al., 2025). In parallel, predictive turnover research demonstrates that advanced people analytics can explain and forecast turnover intention using large-scale survey data, identify the most influential risk drivers, and support earlier, more precise interventions before attrition occurs (Lazzari et al., 2022). Collectively, these findings strengthen the case for embedding analytics-informed well-being monitoring into routine talent and workforce governance.

6. Social Change in the Business and Scholar Community

The research findings of this project have meaningful implications for positive social change by addressing persistent gaps in how organizations identify and implement effective employee well-being strategies to reduce employee turnover and associated replacement costs. Rather than treating well-being as a collection of isolated initiatives, HR leaders can see a sustainable impact occur when well-being is embedded across organizational systems, leadership practices, and decision-making processes.

6.1. Supporting Sustainable Work Design

Integrating work-life flexibility and sustainable work design with well-being and psychological safety underscores the importance of creating work environments that support both functional and emotional sustainability. Researchers highlighted FWAs, manageable workloads, and psychologically safe cultures as foun-

dational strategies for reducing burnout and voluntary turnover (Çivilidağ & Durmaz, 2024). These approaches address a critical limitation of traditional well-being strategies that emphasize individual resilience while overlooking structural and systemic conditions. From a social change perspective, embedding flexibility and psychological safety into organizational norms promotes more equitable access to sustainable employment, particularly for employees managing caregiving responsibilities, health concerns, or other life demands. Collectively, these practices contribute to broader societal outcomes by reinforcing employee dignity, long-term employability, and economic security.

6.2. Enhancing Leadership Behavior and Communication

This research project highlighted the critical role of people-centered leadership in sustaining employee trust and engagement during organizational change. Researchers showed that leaders who prioritized empathy, inclusion, and consistent communication were instrumental in maintaining trust and engagement, particularly during periods of organizational change (Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022). These findings address a gap in well-being approaches that overlook the psychological and relational impact of poorly managed change. By fostering inclusive leadership and strengthening change communication practices, organizations can reduce turnover driven by uncertainty and enhance employee commitment. The social change implication lies in shifting organizational cultures away from hierarchical, compliance-driven models toward more relational, participatory approaches that value employee voice, trust, and shared accountability.

6.3. Leveraging Employee Feedback and Talent Investment

Leveraging employee feedback and analytics with talent growth and total rewards contributes to social change by identifying well-being risks and guiding targeted interventions. Coupled with equitable access to development opportunities, recognition, and competitive compensation, these practices address a key gap in well-being strategies that rely on assumptions rather than evidence. From a social change perspective, strengthening employee voice and investing in talent growth promotes fairness, transparency, and long-term workforce sustainability (Liao et al., 2022). These approaches not only reduce turnover and replacement costs but also contribute to broader societal outcomes by supporting career mobility, financial well-being, and inclusive economic participation.

7. Directions for Future Research

A few limitations of this research project provide important direction for future inquiry. First, the research project relied on a narrow participant pool consisting solely of HR leaders within a specific organizational context. While this approach yielded in-depth insights into HR perspectives, it limits the generalizability and transferability of the findings. Future research should include broader and more diverse samples across industries, organizational sizes, and sectors to enhance ap-

plicability. Incorporating perspectives from non-HR roles, supervisors, and front-line employees would also allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how employee well-being strategies are experienced and operationalized across organizational levels.

Second, the project's cross-sectional design limits the ability to examine changes in employee well-being strategies, engagement, turnover, and replacement costs over time. Longitudinal and mixed-methods research designs would enable researchers to more closely examine relationships among these variables and assess patterns, sustainability, and potential causal pathways. The inclusion of objective organizational metrics, alongside qualitative data would further strengthen explanatory power.

Finally, the potential for social desirability bias or constrained disclosure due to confidentiality considerations represents an additional limitation. Participants may have emphasized favorable practices or withheld critical details. Future research could mitigate this limitation by incorporating anonymous data collection methods, employee-reported outcomes, and triangulation with organizational records to enhance credibility and reduce response bias. Addressing these limitations through expanded research designs, diverse participant groups, and multiple data sources may strengthen the rigor, depth, and applicability of future research on employee well-being strategies and their relationship to employee turnover and replacement costs.

8. Conclusion

This pragmatic qualitative inquiry explored how HR leaders use employee well-being strategies to reduce employee turnover and replacement costs, using semistructured interviews with 10 participants and systematic thematic analysis. The analysis identified six interrelated themes: work-life flexibility and sustainable work design; well-being and psychological safety; data-driven feedback and HR analytics; change enablement and communication; inclusive people-centered leadership; and talent growth and total rewards. These themes aligned with the conceptual framework guiding the research, social sustainability theory, and ECSF. Findings indicate that proactive, data-informed, and contextually aligned well-being strategies strengthen engagement, trust, and workforce stability. HR leaders can meaningfully reduce turnover and associated costs by intentionally integrating flexible work structures, psychological safety, employee feedback mechanisms, transparent change communication, and aligned development and reward practices into a cohesive, organization-wide well-being strategy.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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